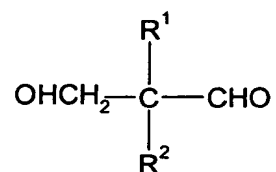


IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A process for the catalytic hydrogenation of methylolalkanals of the formula



where R^1 and R^2 are each, independently of one another, a further methylol group or an alkyl group having from 1 to 22 carbon atoms or an aryl or aralkyl group having from 6 to 33 carbon atoms, in the liquid phase over a ~~hydrogenation~~ hydrogenation catalyst, wherein the pH of the hydrogenation feed is set to from 6.3 to 7.8 by addition of at least one tertiary amine.

Claim 2 (Original): The process according to claim 1, wherein the hydrogenation feed contains less than 5% by weight of formaldehyde.

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): The process according to claim 1 ~~or 2~~, wherein a tri-n-alkylamine is used.

Claim 4 (Currently Amended): The process according to ~~any of claims 1 to 3~~ claim 1, wherein trimethylamine, triethylamine, tri-n-propylamine and/or tri-n-butylamine is/are used.

Claim 5 (Currently Amended): The process according to ~~any of claims 1 to 4~~ claim 1, wherein the hydrogenation catalyst comprises at least one metal of transition groups 8 to 12 of the Periodic Table of the Elements.

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): The process according to ~~any of claims 1 to 5~~ claim 1, wherein the hydrogenation catalyst is a supported catalyst.

Claim 7 (Original): The process according to claim 6, wherein the oxides of titanium, zirconium, hafnium, silicon and/or aluminum are used as support material.

Claim 8 (Currently Amended): The process according to ~~any of claims 5 to 7~~ claim 5, wherein the hydrogenation catalyst comprises copper on an Al_2O_3 - or TiO_2 -containing support material in the presence or absence of one or more of the elements magnesium, barium, zinc and chromium.

Claim 9 (Currently Amended): The process according to ~~any of claims 1 to 8~~ claim 1, wherein the methylolalkanal which is hydrogenated is hydroxypivalaldehyde, pentaerythrose or dimethylolbutanal.